



NATIONAL SURVEY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

MISSISSIPPI
Fall 2010

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from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Mississippi had an estimated 301 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving nearly three times their bed capacity over the course of the year.¹ This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: None.

Governor's Appointee: None.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Mississippi	Hinds County ²
Persons in homeless families ³	954	229
Number of family shelter beds ⁴	554	140
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁵	9	11
Percent of families in poverty ⁶	25.06%	20.89%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	No plan	2006
10-Year plan target population	No plan	Chronic
Point-in-time count frequency	Biennially*	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Mississippi United to End Homelessness*	Partners to End Homelessness
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Mississippi United to End Homelessness*	Partners to End Homelessness
Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant or main organizing agency	Mississippi United to End Homelessness*	Partners to End Homelessness

*Corresponds to the Balance of State Continuum of Care, which comprises areas of Mississippi that are not included in a regional or local CoC.

Rebuilding Homeless Housing Services After Hurricane Katrina

In addition to destroying businesses, infrastructure, and traditional residences, Hurricane Katrina decreased the available stock of homeless family housing units in the Gulf Coast Continuum of Care (CoC) in August 2005. Comprised of Pearl River, Stone, George, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties, the Gulf Coast CoC was the hardest-hit area in Mississippi. Of the 61,386 housing units severely damaged or completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina statewide, 52,512 (85.5%) were located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties. Homeless housing programs experienced a loss of 42 emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive family units, a decrease of over three quarters (76.4%). As of 2009, these programs have rebuilt 21 family units using both private and government funds.⁷

Stewpot Community Services

Stewpot Community Services is a collaborative effort between seven local churches to serve homeless individuals and families in the City of Jackson. Stewpot

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The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Mississippi and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

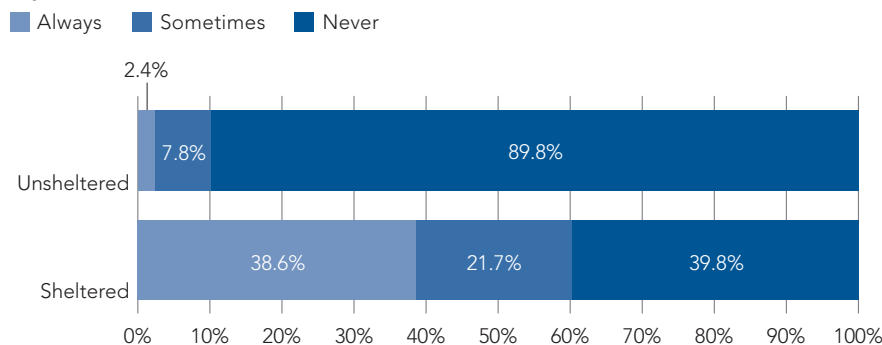
manages Matt's House, the only emergency shelter for homeless families in Jackson. Serving over 300 women and children annually, Matt's House provides housing and employment counseling; parenting, budgeting, and computer classes; and transportation assistance. Stewpot also provides transitional housing for mothers and their children through Sims House. The 60 residents who stay at Sims House each year are required to participate in group and individual therapy, conduct job searches, learn about financial management, and assist in household chores. The Neighborhood Children's Program (NCP), Stewpot's after-school program and summer camp, serves over 200 homeless and low-income children in kindergarten through twelfth grade yearly. The program's staff provides tutoring and recreation in a safe environment. While homeless students often fall behind in school, twelfth-grade NCP participants graduate at the same rate as their housed peers.⁸

The Effect of Homelessness on Family Stability in Hinds County

In January 2010, the Hinds County Continuum of Care (CoC) administered surveys addressing issues of family stability during periods of homelessness as part of its annual point-in-time count. Parents were asked if their minor children always, sometimes, or never lived with them while they were homeless. Of 83 sheltered respondents who currently have or previously had children under age 18, less than two-fifths (39.8%) answered never, while nearly 90% (89.8%) of 206 unsheltered parents answered never.⁹ Parents who did not live with their children have most often been separated due to loss of custody or the willingness of a friend or family member to house their children.¹⁰

How Often Children Remain with a Parent During Periods of Homelessness in Hinds County

(by shelter status)

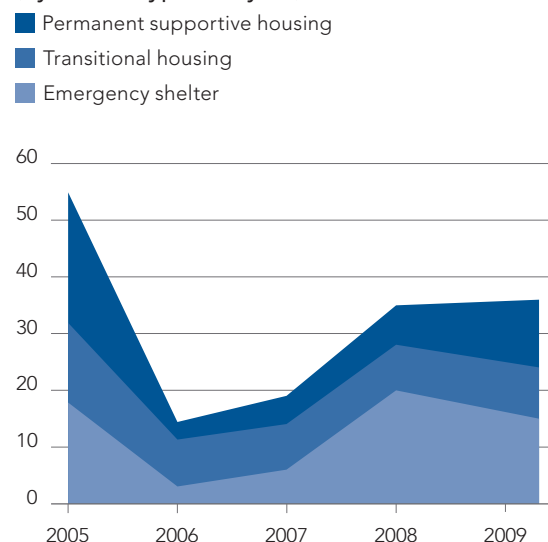


Source: Partners to End Homelessness, 2010 Point-In-Time Count Report. Statistics for Hinds County include Copiah, Madison, Rankin, and Warren counties.

Reasons for Homelessness in Hinds County

In January 2010, Hinds County asked 164 sheltered persons what factors contributed to their homelessness. Survey participants could choose more than one response and most often reported job loss (37.2% of respondents), substance abuse (28.7%), family disruptions such as separations and deaths (22.6%), domestic violence (13.4%), and insufficient wages (11.6%) as the top factors that led to their homelessness. Four years after Hurricane Katrina, very few (1.8%) reported a natural disaster as a contributing cause.¹¹

Available Homeless Family Housing Units in the Gulf Coast (by shelter type and year)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2005–09 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Reports.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.
- Statistics for Hinds County include Copiah, Madison, Rankin, and Warren counties.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2005–09 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Reports; Office of Governor Haley Barbour, Five Years After Katrina: Progress Report on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal, August 2010; Scott Williams (Program Director, Open Doors Homeless Coalition), interview with ICPH, October 2010.
- U.S. Department of Education, The Condition of Education 2010: Public High School Graduation Rates; Tara Lindsey (Director of Volunteer Services, Stewpot Community Services), interview with ICPH, September 2010.
- Although 108 sheltered respondents currently have children under the age of 18, some parents declined to provide data on how often their children accompanied them during periods of homelessness; Kaye Sly (Associate Professor, Jackson State University Department of Psychology), interview with ICPH, September 2010; Partners to End Homelessness, 2010 Point-In-Time Count Report.
- Stacey Howard (Grants Department, Stewpot Community Services), interview with ICPH, September 2010.
- Partners to End Homelessness, 2010 Point-In-Time Count Report.